



SPENCER

Worcester County

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NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Spencer is located in central Worcester County, twenty minutes west of Worcester and about forty five minutes from Springfield. Largely residential, Spencer has been a supplier of workers in all categories for nearly every industry in the greater Worcester area. Ease of travel to all sections of the county makes Spencer a desirable area in which to live.

Route 31 gives access to Holden, Fitchburg, Leominster in the north; Charlton, Oxford and Southbridge in the south. Route 49 gives easy access to Sturbridge, Brimfield, Southbridge, the Mass Turnpike and Interstate 86 to Connecticut. Route 9 leads westerly through the Brookfields and Ware to the Amherst Campus of the University of Massachusetts and easterly to Worcester, Shrewsbury, Northborough, and Westborough. In addition to its own small commercial airfield on Paxton Road, Spencer is less than twenty minutes from Worcester airport and the industrial complex located next to it.

Spencer is also home for several large dairy farms, indicating that the town's fertile soil is not only suited for residential use. Several major lakes and ponds are also located in the town, including Stiles Reservoir, Thompson Pond, Lake Whittemore, Cranberry Meadow, Sugden Reservoir and Brooks Pond, providing recreational boating, swimming and fishing for the public.

Settled in 1717 by Nathaniel Wood, Spencer was incorporated as a town in 1753. It has been established as a district from a part of Leicester. Its name was assigned by Lieutenant Governor Spencer Phipps who had signed the order establishing the district. In 1784, Spencer was a major stopping place on the Old Boston Post Road's stage route between Boston and Hartford, and on to New York. Spencer's first mill was built in 1740 on Seven Mile River, the greatest source of water power in the town. In 1811, Josiah Green began making shoes, and in 1834 he built a factory. The Prouty family began to make shoes in 1820, and built their factory in 1855. In 1812, Elliot Prouty had begun to "draw" wire in a mill he had built. His business flourished in his family until 1916, when it merged with Wickwire Steel Company. At one time there were 11 factories and 26 buildings for wire drawing.

The Howe family of Spencer did much to make the town famous in the annals of ingenious Americans. William Howe of Spencer developed a wooden truss bridge named for him, and his brother Tyler Howe, patented a spring bed. Their nephew, Elias Howe, Jr., may well have eclipsed them when he invented the lockstitch sewing machine.

(Narrative supplied by community)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Central Massachusetts, bordered by Oakham on the north, Paxton on the northeast, Leicester on the east, Charlton on the south, and East Brookfield and North Brookfield on the west. Spencer is 11 miles west of Worcester and 51 miles west of Boston.

Total Area: 34.05 sq. miles

Land Area: 32.85 sq. miles

Population: 11,645

Density: 354 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Buffumville Lake Station)

Normal temperature in January.....21.7°F

Normal temperature in July.....69.8°F

Normal annual precipitation.....46.4"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Leicester, Paxton, North Brookfield, East Brookfield

Regional Planning Agency

Central Massachusetts

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)

Worcester



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (508) 885-7500

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1753

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	6,085		
Democrats	2,194	36.1	%
Republicans	836	13.7	%
Other parties	6	0.1	%
Unenrolled Voters	3,049	50.1	%

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Spencer town, Worcester County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	11,691	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	11,691	100.0
Male.....	5,785	49.5	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	156	1.3
Female.....	5,906	50.5	Mexican.....	7	0.1
Under 5 years.....	743	6.4	Puerto Rican.....	106	0.9
5 to 9 years.....	763	6.5	Cuban.....	1	-
10 to 14 years.....	843	7.2	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	42	0.4
15 to 19 years.....	830	7.1	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	11,535	98.7
20 to 24 years.....	715	6.1	White alone.....	11,347	97.1
25 to 34 years.....	1,564	13.4	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	1,928	16.5	Total population.....	11,691	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	1,788	15.3	In households.....	11,579	99.0
55 to 59 years.....	611	5.2	Householder.....	4,583	99.2
60 to 64 years.....	458	3.9	Spouse.....	2,427	20.8
65 to 74 years.....	757	6.5	Child.....	3,489	29.8
75 to 84 years.....	557	4.8	Own child under 18 years.....	2,623	22.4
85 years and over.....	134	1.1	Other relatives.....	416	3.6
Median age (years).....	37.0	(X)	Under 18 years.....	162	1.4
18 years and over.....	8,819	75.4	Nonrelatives.....	664	5.7
Male.....	4,318	36.9	Unmarried partner.....	349	3.0
Female.....	4,501	38.5	In group quarters.....	112	1.0
21 years and over.....	8,379	71.7	Institutionalized population.....	29	0.2
62 years and over.....	1,690	14.5	Noninstitutionalized population.....	83	0.7
65 years and over.....	1,448	12.4	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	631	5.4	Total households.....	4,583	100.0
Female.....	817	7.0	Family households (families).....	3,094	67.5
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	1,453	31.7
One race.....	11,616	99.4	Married-couple family.....	2,427	53.0
White.....	11,449	97.9	With own children under 18 years.....	1,041	22.7
Black or African American.....	69	0.6	Female householder, no husband present.....	471	10.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	28	0.2	With own children under 18 years.....	300	6.5
Asian.....	38	0.3	Nonfamily households.....	1,489	32.5
Asian Indian.....	4	-	Householder living alone.....	1,187	25.9
Chinese.....	10	0.1	Householder 65 years and over.....	472	10.3
Filipino.....	4	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	1,575	34.4
Japanese.....	1	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	1,040	22.7
Korean.....	7	0.1	Average household size.....	2.53	(X)
Vietnamese.....	4	-	Average family size.....	3.05	(X)
Other Asian ¹	8	0.1	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	2	-	Total housing units.....	4,938	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	2	-	Occupied housing units.....	4,583	92.8
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	355	7.2
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	122	2.5
Some other race.....	30	0.3	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	1.0	(X)
Two or more races.....	75	0.6	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	5.2	(X)
Race alone or in combination with one			HOUSING TENURE		
or more other races: ³			Occupied housing units.....	4,583	100.0
White.....	11,513	98.5	Owner-occupied housing units.....	2,871	62.6
Black or African American.....	92	0.8	Renter-occupied housing units.....	1,712	37.4
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	61	0.5	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.78	(X)
Asian.....	49	0.4	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	2.10	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	5	-			
Some other race.....	51	0.4			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 194

Conventional Federal: 0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 17

Federal (Section 8): 0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Located in the Worcester area, which has three major cross-state highways: the Worcester Turnpike (Route 9), Route 20, and the Massachusetts Turnpike. I-495 borders to the east, I-190 links to the Fitchburg-Leominster area, I-84 and I-395 connect to Connecticut and points south. The region is well connected by rail and highway to the ports, airports, and intermodal facilities of Boston and Providence.

Major Highways

Principal highways are State Route 9, which traverses Massachusetts in a roughly E-W direction, and State Route 31 running N-S.

Rail

Conrail provides freight rail service through Spencer. Contact number: (617) 783-6222

Bus

Spencer is a member of the Worcester Regional Transit Authority (WRTA) but does not receive services.

Other

The Worcester Municipal Airport, a Primary Commercial (PR) facility with scheduled passenger service, is easily accessible. It has 2 asphalt runways 5,500' and 6,999' long. Instrument approaches available: Precision and non-precision.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

Lincoln Hill Manor Rest Home

St. Joseph's Abbey Resident Center

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.